



Phase II and Phase III Archeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18PR135

Site Name: Belair Mansion

Prehistoric ☐

Other name(s)

Historic ☒

Unknown ☐

Brief Description:

18th-20th century plantation

Site Location and Environmental Data:

Latitude 38.9680 Longitude -76.7371

Elevation 61 m Site slope 6-10%

Site setting

-Site Setting restricted

-Lat/Long accurate to within 1 sq. mile, user may need to make slight adjustments in mapping to account for sites near state/county lines or streams

Maryland Archeological Research Unit No. 8

SCS soil & sediment code CpC

Physiographic province Western Shore Coastal

Terrestrial site ☒

Underwater site ☐

Ethnobotany profile available ☒ Maritime site ☐

Nearest Surface Water

Name (if any) Collington Creek

Saltwater

Ocean ☐

Estuary/tidal river ☐

Tidewater/marsh ☐

Spring ☐

Minimum distance to water is 610 m

Freshwater

Stream/river ☒

Swamp ☐

Lake or pond ☐

Temporal & Ethnic Contextual Data:

Paleoindian site ☐

Woodland site ☒

Archaic site ☐

MD Adena ☐

Early archaic ☐

Early woodland ☐

Middle archaic ☐

Mid. woodland ☐

Late archaic ☐

Late woodland ☐

Unknown prehistoric context ☐

Contact period site ☐ ca. 1820 - 1860 ☒

ca. 1630 - 1675 ☐ ca. 1860 - 1900 ☒

ca. 1675 - 1720 ☐ ca. 1900 - 1930 ☒

ca. 1720 - 1780 ☒ Post 1930 ☒

ca. 1780 - 1820 ☒

Unknown historic context ☐

Unknown context ☐

Ethnic Associations (historic only)

Native American ☐

Asian American ☐

African American ☒

Unknown ☐

Anglo-American ☒

Other ☐

Hispanic ☐

Y=Confirmed, P=Possible

Site Function Contextual Data:

Prehistoric

Multi-component ☐

Misc. ceremonial ☐

Village ☐

Rock art ☐

Hamlet ☐

Shell midden ☐

Base camp ☐

STU/lithic scatter ☒

Rockshelter/cave ☐

Quarry/extraction ☐

Earthen mound ☐

Fish weir ☐

Cairn ☐

Production area ☐

Burial area ☐

Unknown ☐

Other context ☐

Historic

Urban/Rural? Rural ☒

Domestic

Homestead ☐

Farmstead ☐

Mansion ☒

Plantation ☒

Row/townhome ☐

Cellar ☐

Privy ☐

Industrial

Mining-related ☐

Quarry-related ☐

Mill ☐

Black/metalsmith ☐

Furnace/forge ☐

Other ☐

Transportation

Canal-related ☐

Road/railroad ☐

Wharf/landing ☐

Maritime-related ☐

Bridge ☐

Ford ☐

Educational

Commercial

Trading post ☐

Store ☐

Tavern/inn ☐

Military

Battlefield ☐

Fortification ☐

Encampment ☐

Townsite

Religious

Church/mtg house ☐

Ch support bldg ☐

Burial area

Cemetery ☒

Sepulchre ☒

Isolated burial ☐

Bldg or foundation ☒

Possible Structure ☐

Post-in-ground ☐

Frame-built ☐

Masonry ☒

Other structure ☐

Slave related

Non-domestic agri ☐

Recreational

Midden/dump ☒

Artifact scatter ☐

Spring or well ☐

Unknown ☐

Other context ☐

Interpretive Sampling Data:

Prehistoric context samples

Soil samples taken N

Flotation samples taken N

Other samples taken

Historic context samples

Soil samples taken Y

Flotation samples taken Y

Other samples taken Faunal analysis pending



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Diagnostic Artifact Data:

Projectile Point Types	
Clovis	<input type="text"/>
Hardaway-Dalton	<input type="text"/>
Palmer	<input type="text"/>
Kirk (notch)	<input type="text"/>
Kirk (stem)	<input type="text"/>
Le Croy	<input type="text"/>
Morrow Mntn	<input type="text"/>
Guilford	<input type="text"/>
Brewerton	<input type="text"/>
Otter Creek	<input type="text"/>
Koens-Crispin	<input type="text"/>
Perkiomen	<input type="text"/>
Susquehanna	<input type="text"/>
Vernon	<input type="text"/>
Piscataway	<input type="text"/>
Calvert	<input type="text"/>
Selby Bay	<input type="text"/>
Jacks Rf (notch)	<input type="text"/>
Jacks Rf (pent)	<input type="text"/>
Madison/Potomac	<input type="text"/>
Levanna	<input type="text"/>

Prehistoric Sherd Types

Marcey Creek	<input type="text"/>	Popes Creek	<input type="text"/>	Shepard	<input type="text"/>	Keyser	<input type="text"/>
Dames Qtr	<input type="text"/>	Coulbourn	<input type="text"/>	Townsend	<input type="text"/>	Yeocomico	<input type="text"/>
Selden Island	<input type="text"/>	Watson	<input type="text"/>	Minguannan	<input type="text"/>	Monongahela	<input type="text"/>
Accokeek	<input type="text"/>	Mockley	<input type="text"/>	Sullivan Cove	<input type="text"/>	Susquehannock	<input type="text"/>
Wolfe Neck	<input type="text"/>	Clemson Island	<input type="text"/>	Shenks Ferry	<input type="text"/>		
Vinette	<input type="text"/>	Page	<input type="text"/>	Moyaone	<input type="text"/>		
				Potomac Cr	<input type="text"/>		

Historic Sherd Types

Earthenware		Ironstone	<input type="text"/> 5	Staffordshire	<input type="text"/> 1	Stoneware	
Astbury	<input type="text"/>	Jackfield	<input type="text"/> 2	Tin Glazed	<input type="text"/> 130	English Brown	<input type="text"/> 26
Borderware	<input type="text"/>	Mn Mottled	<input type="text"/>	Whiteware	<input type="text"/> 119	Eng Dry-bodie	<input type="text"/>
Buckley	<input type="text"/> 33	North Devon	<input type="text"/> 19	Porcelain	<input type="text"/> 248	Nottingham	<input type="text"/>
Creamware	<input type="text"/> 560	Pearlware	<input type="text"/> 63			Rhenish	<input type="text"/> 6
						Wt Salt-glazed	<input type="text"/> 127

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Other Artifact & Feature Types:

Prehistoric Artifacts	
Flaked stone	<input type="text"/> 1
Ground stone	<input type="text"/>
Stone bowls	<input type="text"/>
Fire-cracked rock	<input type="text"/>
Other lithics (all)	<input type="text"/>
Ceramics (all)	<input type="text"/>
Rimsherds	<input type="text"/>
Other fired clay	<input type="text"/>
Human remain(s)	<input type="text"/>
Modified faunal	<input type="text"/>
Unmod faunal	<input type="text"/>
Oyster shell	<input type="text"/>
Floral material	<input type="text"/>
Uncommon Obj.	<input type="text"/>
Other	<input type="text"/>

Prehistoric Features

Mound(s)	<input type="text"/>	Storage/trash pit	<input type="text"/>
Midden	<input type="text"/>	Burial(s)	<input type="text"/>
Shell midden	<input type="text"/>	Ossuary	<input type="text"/>
Postholes/molds	<input type="text"/>	Unknown	<input type="text"/>
House pattern(s)	<input type="text"/>	Other	<input type="text"/>
Palisade(s)	<input type="text"/>		
Hearth(s)	<input type="text"/>		
Lithic reduc area	<input type="text"/>		

Lithic Material

Fer quartzite	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sil sandstone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Jasper	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chalcedony	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chert	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ironstone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rhyolite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Argilite	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartz	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Steatite	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quartzite	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sandstone	<input type="checkbox"/>

☒ Dated features present at site

Numerous features containing diagnostic historic artifacts

Historic Artifacts	
Pottery (all)	<input type="text"/> 2093
Glass (all)	<input type="text"/> 3978
Architectural	<input type="text"/> 2237
Furniture	<input type="text"/>
Arms	<input type="text"/> 2
Clothing	<input type="text"/> 2
Personal items	<input type="text"/> 2
Tobacco related	<input type="text"/> 75
Activity item(s)	<input type="text"/> 43
Human remain(s)	<input type="text"/>
Faunal material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Misc. kitchen	<input type="text"/> 3853
Floral material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Misc.	<input type="text"/> 172
Other	<input type="text"/>

Historic Features

Privy/outhouse	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depression/mound	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unknown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Const feature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Well/cistern	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burial(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Foundation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Trash pit/dump	<input type="checkbox"/>	Railroad bed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cellar hole/cellar	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sheet midden	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Earthworks	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hearth/chimney	<input type="checkbox"/>	Planting feature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mill raceway	<input type="checkbox"/>
Postholes/molds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Road/walkway	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wheel pit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paling ditch/fence	<input type="checkbox"/>				

All quantities exact or estimated minimal counts

Radiocarbon Data:

Sample 1:	<input type="text"/> +/- <input type="text"/> years BP	Reliability	Sample 2:	<input type="text"/> +/- <input type="text"/> years BP	Reliability	Sample 3:	<input type="text"/> +/- <input type="text"/> years BP	Reliability
Sample 4:	<input type="text"/> +/- <input type="text"/> years BP	Reliability	Sample 5:	<input type="text"/> +/- <input type="text"/> years BP	Reliability	Sample 6:	<input type="text"/> +/- <input type="text"/> years BP	Reliability
Sample 7:	<input type="text"/> +/- <input type="text"/> years BP	Reliability	Sample 8:	<input type="text"/> +/- <input type="text"/> years BP	Reliability	Sample 9:	<input type="text"/> +/- <input type="text"/> years BP	Reliability

☐ Additional radiocarbon results available



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External Samples/Data:

Collection curated at

☒ Additional raw data may be available online

Summary Description:

Site 18PR135 consists of the archeological deposits associated with the standing Belair Mansion (PG:71B-4) structure, the core of an 18th-20th Century plantation in Bowie, Prince George's County. Although situated in the middle of the modern "Levitt-town" housing development, Belair Mansion was traditionally a country seat surrounded by slightly rolling terrain, dissected here and there by tributaries of the Patuxent River. Prior to the 18th century, most of the Bowie area probably was forested. By the middle of the 19th century, farms replaced the forests, woodlots preserved only in those areas less suited to tobacco and grain agriculture. Soils consist primarily of Sassafras sandy loams and Rumford loamy sands, although they have been extensively modified by residential and commercial development since the 1950s.

The mansion itself is a large, five-part, 2½ storey, Palladian-inspired brick structure. The original central block was constructed ca. 1740, with one and two storey, two-part wings added in the early 20th century. The original house was 2½ storeys with a projecting central pavilion and low-pitched hip-on-hip roof. The principal, or garden façade faces south and is seven bays in length laid up in Flemish bond with glazed headers. Double-chimneys are present at either end of the central/original block. The mansion is surrounded by terraced gardens and other significant investments in formal landscaping.

The mansion is currently owned and operated by the City of Bowie as a historic museum and public reception center. Much of the archeology conducted at 18PR135 has been geared towards accurate reconstruction and interpretation of the plantation site. In addition, a significant amount of archival study has been conducted, which informs on the life and habits of the residents of the plantation.

Archival work reveals that the Reverend Jacob Henderson was the first to name the tract on which the manor sits "Belair" in 1721 following his resurvey of the property. The location of Henderson's homelot on the 1,410 acre tract has not been determined from archival sources, and archeological work at Belair has yet to produce historic refuse predating the mid-18th century. In 1737, Henderson sold Belair, Woodcock's Range (167 acres), and Enfield Chase (100 acres) to Samuel Ogle and Benjamin Tasker, the former buying out the latter's share in August of that year.

Samuel Ogle served as royal governor of the colony and Benjamin Tasker succeeded to that office temporarily upon Ogle's death in 1752. Samuel Ogle married Tasker's daughter Anne in 1742. The newlyweds set sail for England later that year, leaving Benjamin Tasker with power-of-attorney and, reportedly, the supervision of the construction of Belair Mansion. When the Ogles returned to the colony in 1747, Samuel having been re-appointed as royal governor, they occupied the new edifice at Belair. Since government, business, and society drew them to Annapolis, some 16 miles to the east, Samuel and Anne leased from Daniel Cheston a house on the corner of King George Street and College Avenue (then known as Tabernacle). The Ogles eventually acquired this dwelling, Anne conveying it to her son Benjamin in June 1773. Samuel and Anne Ogle used Belair as a retreat and, of course, as a working (and, presumably, remunerative) plantation.

Upon Samuel's death in 1752, his executors Benjamin (the son) and Benjamin Tasker, Jr., managed the estate. Benjamin, Jr. died in 1760 and it is believed that many of the improvements to the estate (including new gutters and drainage improvements) can be attributed to his tenure. The leader heads for downspouts survive and on the west façade of the main block bears Tasker's initials and a date of 1757. Samuel Ogle's son and heir, Benjamin, acquired the estate in 1774. Like his father and grandfather before him, Benjamin Ogle became governor of Maryland (1798). Unlike his father and grandfather, Benjamin Ogle was not an appointed royal governor, but an elected official of a recently erected sovereign state.

In 1796, Ogle deeded Belair to his son Benjamin Ogle II who is believed to have lived there with his wife Anna Marie and their children until his death in 1844. Benjamin Ogle II's sons George Cooke and Richard Lowndes Ogle inherited the estate, George receiving the mansion. The brothers took a mortgage from their uncle William Henry Tayloe of Virginia in the 1860s. After his death, Tayloe's heirs foreclosed (1871) and let the estate for several years. The Rutter family purchased Belair in 1877. Jasher C. Shriner, the next owner, purchased Belair at auction in 1892. He shortly sold it to Christian Bachman Herr who then sold it to Benjamin Hardesty in 1896. Hardesty sold Belair to James T. Woodward in 1898.

James Woodward is credited with adding the hyphens and wings to the mansion, asserting the expanded bilateral symmetry originally intended for the building. Woodward's nephew, William Woodward, Sr., inherited Belair upon the former's death in 1910. He bequeathed it to his son William Woodward, Jr., in 1953. William, Jr. lived in Oyster Bay, Long Island, New York, and used Belair on a part-time basis only. Upon his death in 1955, Levitt and Sons, Inc., purchased the estate with the intention of building one of their middle class, post-WWII suburbs. The mansion served as their offices until they donated it to the City of Bowie in 1964. The City since has used the building to house governmental offices, the police station, and the Genealogical Society library. Renovation was completed in 1996 and the building and grounds now serve as a museum and reception center.

In sum, Belair has served as an elite domicile, governmental seat, plantation, and family business headquarters for much of its 250-year existence. Its transformation, first into a corporate office building and then into a municipal building, was one of increased specialization rather than complete change in function. The mansion grounds have been altered dramatically as the late 19th and early 20th century owners transformed the plantation and retreat into a retreat and horse farm. The Levitts, however, effected the greatest changes; demolishing most of the suburban plantation outbuildings and tenancies, and erecting the large suburban tract community that currently constitutes a large portion of the City of Bowie.

The first documented archeological work at the site was conducted in 1976 at the behest of the City of Bowie Bicentennial Committee. This committee was one of many such local committees scattered throughout the nation tasked with preparing for the celebration of the American Bicentennial. At the time, there was widespread interest in funding the excavation of 18th century archeological sites of local significance. Belair Mansion, once the home of two colonial governors and an early governor of the State of Maryland was the site of archeological work sponsored by the Bowie town committee.

For 6 ½ days in April of 1976, the Bicentennial Committee sponsored excavation designed to identify dependency buildings known to have existed in the vicinity of the mansion from archival sources. Two principal documents guided the survey: notice of an estate auction published in the Virginia Gazette in 1769 and the Federal Tax Assessment of 1798. The tax assessment listed several buildings along with their dimensions including the original dwelling house (now the central block), a green house adjoining, a two-storey high brick kitchen, and a brick poultry house. The notice of estate auction provides details about movable and real property associated with the estate upon the death of Benjamin Tasker, Sr. and lists the mansion house and 2 storey brick house near it, plantation of 2,177 acres, 21 slaves, stock, household kitchen, furniture, plows, and tools. A sketch by a Frank Mayer appeared in Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly in April of 1886 (prior to the addition of the extant east and west wings). This and an 1892 photograph of the Mansion provide some clarification of the



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layout that might have accommodated the aforementioned structures: most importantly the location of adjoining ancillary structures in the area of the extant east wing. These illustrations depict just a few of what were probably many alterations made to the building's exterior and landscape over the past 250 years.

The 1976 excavations were conducted by a volunteer crew, working under the guidance of a professional archeologist. The volunteer crew excavated a total of eighteen 1.5 X 1.5 meter units on the north side of the mansion's east hyphen and wing, and three slightly less regular units along its south façade. All units were excavated stratigraphically, the soil screened, the artifacts retained, and the walls and floors of the units drawn to scale.

The April 1976 excavations demonstrated the existence of wall remnants on both sides of the house (north and south) and a drainage duct on the southeast corner of the mansion. All of these features probably date to the 18th or 19th centuries. A re-analysis of the 1976 collection could help clarify the dating of these structures, but the original collections appear to have been misplaced and their location is not currently known. Just to the northeast of the east wing, a stone foundation, associated builder's trenches, and a brick paving were identified. The paving was interpreted by the original excavators as an adjoining walkway, but subsequent researchers have suggested that it might be a garden feature of uncertain design or the remains of a domestic outbuilding such as a kitchen. Brick flooring would not have been an unusual feature in a dependency structure at an 18th or early 19th century elite residence. Kitchens, laundries, provision houses, greenhouses, or orangeries, and a variety of other functionally –specific buildings may have been paved with bricks.

The 1976 excavations also revealed foundations and a drain on the south side of the mansion, contiguous with its east wall. The function and date of the structure is uncertain, although the building must pre-date 1900 (the approximate construction date for the extant east hyphen and wing) as portions of the foundation were removed for subsequent construction. Whether these walls pre-date the mansion or represent one or more dependencies or additions would require further excavation and analysis than what was conducted in 1976. The structure (or structures) appears to be in line with the mansion and do not extend into the formal terraced garden.

Reported artifacts from the 1976 excavations include 20 activity items, 603 architectural artifacts, 2 clothing items (a brass button and a brass straight pin), 377 kitchen-related artifacts, 4 tobacco-related items (kaolin pipe pieces), 44 miscellaneous historic-era items, and 1 prehistoric object (a quartz projectile point). The activity items were 4 pieces of lighting glass, 9 wire fragments, 6 iron strap pieces, and a section of a brass bridle. The architectural artifacts were 3 pieces of mortar, a piece of copper roof flashing, 5 copper rain gutter sections, a wire gutter guard, 233 pieces of probable window glass, 3 pieces of plaster, 348 nails (258 square, 89 wire, and a gutter nail), 2 square spikes, 2 screws, a piece of house hardware, a piece of door/latch hardware, a door or shutter pin, an iron pipe fragment, and a copper pipe fragment. The kitchen-related artifacts included 221 ceramic sherds (2 Jackfield, 13 green feather-edged earthenware, 2 slipware, 88 creamware, 27 pearlware, 16 miscellaneous earthenware, 28 whiteware, 4 delftware, 7 domestic brown & gray stoneware, 2 white salt-glazed stoneware, and 32 porcelain), 134 pieces of glass (a glass bottle seal marked "B. Ogle", 4 table glass fragments, 10 molded bottle fragments, and 119 other container glass pieces), and 22 animal tusk/teeth fragments. And finally, the miscellaneous historic objects included a piece of lead scrap, 9 slate fragments, 2 pieces of rubber, 30 coal fragments, and 2 pieces of slag.

Additional archeological excavation was conducted at 18PR135 sporadically from 1976 to 1984. Planned restoration of Belair Mansion for public use required an additional means of egress from the basement. The City of Bowie planned to reopen the east half of the areaway that runs the full length of the north façade of the main mansion block, and a cellar doorway that probably had been filled around the middle of the 19th century. Another volunteer crew excavated most of the areaway along the north façade between 1976 and 1984; backfilling the excavations with sand soon after. The excavations yielded large numbers of artifacts, some photographs, but little recorded stratigraphic information. A complete plan of the excavated areaway appears not to have been prepared, although a number of black and white photographs and some cursory notes and drawings documented portions of several brick drains, walls, floors, and steps.

Throughout the 1990s, a number of excavations were carried out on the grounds of the larger Belair property by a doctoral candidate at the University of Maryland. Specifically, the work focused on landscape archeology and a series of stables that operated on site during the 20th century. Although a final report was produced, no copy of the Phase II/III level report is in the MHT library.

In 1990, the City of Bowie funded the professional re-excavation of the east half of the areaway and the documentation of any surviving features in order to assemble a more complete and unified picture of the areaway and the drainage system. A backhoe removed the sand fill and field crews cleaned the exposed features and surfaces. No artifacts were collected as a part of this project as the area had been previously excavated. A total of 10.67 m (35 ft) of the original 19.8 m (65 ft) long areaway was re-examined during the 1990 study. The new trench exposed English bond brick walls on the east and north sides, each composed of common red bricks coursed to a depth of 1.524 m (5 ft) below grade. The principal products of the 1990 fieldwork were three profile drawings, a complete floor plan of the east half of the areaway, and several observations on the surviving brickwork, stratigraphy, and condition of the features.

The galletted, rusticated stone foundation of the main mansion block defined the south side of the areaway. The upper courses of the east and north areaway walls appear to represent repair work (the mortar, bricks, and brick orientations differing discernibly from the lower courses). Removal of a wrought iron railing mortised into coping stones may explain the need for the repairs. The stonework for an arched stairway leading to the main entrance of the first floor on the north façade interrupts the northern brick wall. A succession of arched and post and lintel brick drains, and extruded terra cotta drains, were exposed in the areaway. Each represented a system for drawing stormwater from the roof to a probable cistern or dry well downslope and to the west of the mansion. During the original excavations of the area in 1983 it was noted that mortises were cut into the mansion's foundation to accommodate treads and risers for stairs at the east end of the areaway. Galletted joints 'shadowed' the missing stairs. Little of the treads or risers, themselves, appear to have survived, while much of the areaway's original brick floor survived intact.

The City of Bowie reopened the cellar door and rehabilitated the areaway in 1991, but made no attempt to replicate the original appearance of the areaway at the request of the Maryland Historical Trust. Restoration of the interior and exterior of Belair Mansion progressed rapidly from 1991 to 1994, but the building could not reopen without first solving off-street parking problems. The museum master plan called for renovation of the 1960s era parking lot, creation of a parking lot on the west lawn, and replacement of the driveway. The museum master plan also called for the construction of new sidewalks. In 1994, the City of Bowie hired a professional CRM firm to conduct a Phase I survey of the west lawn (location of a proposed new overflow parking lot) and a limited Phase II site examination of the existing parking area and driveway. The City, acting on a recommendation from their landscape architecture consultants, also requested limited testing of the terraced lawns on the south side of the mansion.

Eighteen shovel test pits (STPs) and three 1.524 X 1.524 m (5 X 5 ft) units were excavated in the unpaved portion of the east yard (i.e. the existing parking lot area), and approximately 37.16 square meters (400 ft²) was troweled upon removal of a portion of the existing pavement. The combined excavations revealed the foundations of two structures. One of these was a portion of the stone foundation previously exposed during the 1976 study. The other masonry structure



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consists of a course of bricks and brickbats, approximately 4.57 X .61 m (15 X 2 ft), lying directly on, and partially embedded within, the clay loam subsoil. A small, non-structural post hole and mold also were found in the northernmost of the three east yard excavation units. Extensive disturbance to deposits resulted from the earlier parking lot construction and the installation of a stormwater drainpipe that extends northward from the northeast corner of the main block of the mansion to a local road. Based on this evidence of disturbance, no further work was conducted in the east yard, other than the archeological monitoring of the demolition of the remaining pavement.

Twenty-five shovel tests were excavated in the proposed west parking lot area. Two of these STPs revealed dense deposits of brick and mortar rubble, not unlike those encountered in the east yard. Two 1.524 X 1.524 m excavation units exposed portions of two foundation walls, or footers. The one is mortared fieldstone and the other (running perpendicular to and probably bonded with the first) is brick. Based on the undisturbed nature of the features and on the diagnostic artifacts, these test excavations indicate that intact archeological deposits dating to the 19th century (and possibly earlier) survive in this area. The city redesigned the west parking lot to avoid damage to the intact deposits, using fill and plastic gridding to serve as a barrier between the parking lot surface and the intact deposits below.

Twenty-seven STPs were excavated along a transect through the terraced garden area from the south wall of the mansion to the crest of the last terrace. Supplemental probing with a tile probe and two additional shovel tests was undertaken to determine whether or not a central walkway or side walkways extended down the terraces. No such evidence was encountered. Two 91 X 91 cm (3 X 3 ft) units were excavated into the clay substrate in order to identify possible earlier terrace stairs and to collect pollen samples. No evidence of earlier stairs was encountered. A contiguous series of pollen samples, extending into the clay substrate, was taken from one unit. Twentieth century bottle glass was recovered from the two upper strata and evidence of a gully was noted for the second stratum. Taken together with the crispness of the terrace outlines and the relative youth of bordering trees, it was suggested by the project PI that the terraces had been reconstructed, if not wholly created, within the last 50 to 100 years.

Artifacts recovered during the 1994 study include 23 activity items, 798 architectural objects, 1,331 kitchen-related artifacts, 2 personal items, 11 tobacco-related artifacts, 2 arms items, and 99 miscellaneous objects. The Activity items were a China doll leg, 5 vinyl record fragments, a metal bike bell, 13 lamp glass fragments, an iron ring, a piece of iron strap, and an iron machine part. The architectural assemblage consisted of at least 48 fragments of brick, 1 tile, 8 pieces of mortar, 365 window glass fragments, 373 nails (131 wrought, 199 cut, 2 wire, and 41 unidentified), 1 cut spike, 1 screw, and a piece of terra cotta sewerage pipe. The kitchen items were 396 ceramic sherds (9 tin-glazed, 68 creamware, 21 pearlware, 5 annularware, 63 whiteware, 1 Rockingham, 1 yellowware, 97 redware, 44 porcelain, 8 miscellaneous earthenware, 18 demi-porcelain, 17 gray salt-glazed stoneware, 25 white salt-glazed stoneware, & 19 miscellaneous stoneware), 681 pieces of glass (a glass lid liner, a bottle seal marked "B. Ogle", 3 pieces of modern table glass, 208 olive wine bottle glass, 157 pieces of late 18th/19th century bottle glass, 305 pieces of 20th century bottle glass, & 6 other bottle glass fragments), 246 animal bones, and 8 pieces of oyster shell. The 2 personal items were a 1962 penny and a 1963 nickel. The tobacco-related artifacts were 8 pipe stems and 3 bowls. The arms objects were a .22 caliber shell and a piece of buckshot. And finally, the miscellaneous objects included 27 unidentified metal objects, 20 pieces of glass, 14 unidentified modern materials, 16 pieces of plastic, a sandstone fragment, and 21 pieces of coal.

These terraced gardens to the south of the mansion appear to be devoid of workspaces and probably were devoted to the entertainment of guests and the recreation of the planter family. This is in contrast to the "east" and "west" yards on the north side of the mansion, which appear to have served as workyards based on the presence of structures as well as midden deposits.

Parking lot demolition and grading took place later in 1994, with all work monitored by a professional archeologist and crew. Pavement removal revealed little of interest. However the backhoe operator accidentally exposed archeological deposits within the east lawn, just beyond the edge of the failed pavement. The operator used the machine's hydraulic posts to steady the machine and provide leverage. In repositioning the machine, he retracted the hydraulic posts, one of which was resting on the lawn. Retraction of that post created a small square hole extending through the topsoil and exposing the subsoil beneath. The archeological crew cleaned the hole (roughly 28 cm² or 3 ft²), squaring the sides and troweling the exposed subsoil. In doing so, they uncovered a feature.

The crew subsequently excavated four 1.524 m² units in the affected area to further explore the feature. All soil was removed by hand, stratigraphically, and screened through hardware mesh, saving all artifacts except for brick and mortar rubble, which were measured in terms of volume and discarded. Unfortunately, no artifact inventory from this monitoring project has been provided to MHT.

All four units revealed an intact demolition layer, consisting of brick and mortar rubble, beneath topsoil fill and overlying a buried A-horizon. Both the rubble and the buried A-horizon yielded large numbers of mid to late 18th century architectural and domestic artifacts, to the exclusion of later materials. Three features were ultimately revealed, including two pits and a structural posthole and mold. The archeological evidence suggested a demolished earthfast structure with a mortared brick chimney and associated kitchen midden. Since these features and deposits lay directly in the middle of the proposed parking lot, MHT recommended Data Recovery in this portion of the site.

Phase III data recovery commenced immediately as the winter of 1994-1995 was approaching. The data recovery team excavated seven additional 1.524 m² units more or less equally distributed over the area of potential effects. This resulted in a roughly 14% sample of the 188 square meter area. All units were excavated by hand, proceeding by natural strata, the soil being screened through hardware mesh, and the artifacts collected by unit and stratum. Brick and mortar were quantified (measurements estimated by volume of bucket filled), but discarded in the field. Once sampled, a gradall removed the artifact bearing strata, exposing the subsoil and features. Several balks were retained, particularly in the central and western parts of the site, to preserve construction-related control points. After re-establishing the grid, the crew troweled and mapped the exposed surface. About half of the features were bisected and hand excavated by natural strata. Exposed profiles were drawn and documented. Some features were excavated in their entirety, yielding rich assemblages of architectural, domestic furnishing, and dietary data. Many features were not sampled due to damage during mechanical stripping. In addition, 28 flotation samples and 1 charcoal/carbon sample were collected for archeobotanical analysis.

About 55 subsurface features and five sitewide strata were identified within the project area. Each of the strata can be dated, at least in rough terms (mid-18th century, late 18th century, late 18th/early 19th century, etc.). Stratigraphic analysis suggests a yard area in which some domestic activities occurred during the second half of the 18th century, followed by the dumping or architectural and domestic debris sometime in the very late 18th century or the first quarter of the 19th century, after which the front east yard appears to have been used passively, perhaps as a garden. Most of the features were found through mechanical grading, obscuring or destroying their stratigraphic relationships to the overlying strata and, thus, making interpretation quite difficult.

Most of the sampled features appear to have been postholes/molds, a group of which form a fenceline. Detailed analysis of the various features suggests that the yards north of the mansion accommodated some domestic activities, perhaps as early as the third quarter of the 18th century and continuing into the last



Phase II and Phase III Archeological Database and Inventory

Site Number: 18PR135

Site Name: Belair Mansion

Prehistoric ☐

Other name(s)

Historic ☒

Brief Description:

18th-20th century plantation

Unknown ☐

quarter. During the last decade or so of the 18th century, and possibly as late as the last quarter of the 19th century, the area was covered with demolition debris from one or more 18th century structures and additional late 18th century domestic debris. The yard likely became a garden, defined by one or more fences, the posts of which appear to have been periodically replaced, and oriented to the principal axes of the mansion. Two linear brick features, also aligned with the house, are difficult to date due to the manner in which they were uncovered (the eastern feature found during Phase II monitoring had also been damaged by 1950s-1960s parking lot construction). They may represent garden features, specifically exedrae in which residents and their guests sat, protected from the elements, and enjoyed the garden. Whether these structures would have predated the fence has not been determined, although they likely did. Whether or not their demolition contributed to a widespread brick rubble layer also remains uncertain. A family cemetery at the foot of the terraced gardens (created in the second quarter of the 19th century) suggests a transition from an elite, highly formal mansion and plantation to a less prestigious farm that revolved more around family than society.

No artifact catalog is provided with the full Phase III site report for 18PR135, and the discussion of artifacts tend to deal only with the most diagnostic or unusual of forms. Thus, the artifact tables above are skewed. Tables within the full site report do reveal the recovery of the following artifacts during the Phase III study in 1994: 836 architectural artifacts, 7,598 kitchen-related items, 60 tobacco-related artifacts (clay pipe stems and bowls), and 29 miscellaneous objects (all coal). The architectural assemblage included 816 handwrought nails, 17 cut nails, 1 wire nail, and 2 unidentified nails. Kitchen-related items include 1,476 ceramic sherds (19 North Devon gravel-tempered, 1 Staffordshire slipware, 33 Buckley, 12 Tin-glazed, 109 Faience, 404 creamware, 15 pearlware, 330 redware, 2 yellowware, 28 whiteware, 5 ironstone, 166 Chinese Export porcelain, 5 Nanking porcelain, 1 Canton porcelain, 24 miscellaneous earthenware, 2 Rhenish brown, 4 Rhenish Blue & Gray, 26 English Brown, 81 White Salt-glazed stoneware, 19 Scratch Blue, 186 miscellaneous stoneware, and 4 unidentified ceramics), 2,545 pieces of bottle glass, and 3,577 animal bones (however, this tally probably contains non-food species).

The results of the ethnobotanical analysis conducted on the flotation and charcoal samples recovered during the Phase III work at 18PR135 are discussed in the linked ethnobotanical profile document.

The collective work conducted at 18PR135 from 1976 onward reveals that the archeological deposits at Belair Mansion have been severely compromised by demolition, new construction, and new landscaping. Surviving resources in the front (north) yards (east and west) are confined to: 1) the west yard (particularly, but not exclusively, under the overflow parking lot), 2) the small portion of the surviving east yard between the east wing and the new parking lot and driveway, and 3) possibly the relatively untested portion of the front yard east of the main driveway and extending to the local access road. Surviving deposits in the south yard may be limited to the uppermost terrace (i.e. that portion immediately adjacent to the building). Earlier traces of gardening and terracing, including early walkways, may survive on the falls and terraces, but testing in 1994 suggests that much of the evidence may have been lost during terrace creation or reconstruction in the early 20th century. Uncovering such evidence, if it survives, may require a larger scale of archeological testing than hitherto has been accomplished.

External Reference Codes (Library ID Numbers):

00006554, 00006677, 00006738, 97001159